

2025

contemporaryamericantheaterfestival

AT SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY

Dear Theater Lover,

Welcome to the Contemporary American Theater Festival's 2025 Season. We are weeks away from opening a season of compelling, humorous, heartwarming, and heartbreaking tales from five fierce playwrights.

Lisa Loomer, Lisa Sanaye Dring, Cody LeRoy Wilson, Mark St. Germain, and Kevin Kling offer their voices and stories with generosity and trust.



CATF produced Lisa Loomer in our very first season, 1991, and she is back in 2025 fresh from her Broadway opening of *Real Women Have Curves*. If you saw the recent show *SUMO* at the Public Theater in New York, then you know the work of **Lisa Sanaye Dring**, and you will love the wild ride she offers us in her latest work. **Cody LeRoy Wilson** returns to his West Virginia home with a piece developed at the NuWorks Festival at Pan Asian Repertory Theatre. Many of you saw **Mark St. Germain's** play, *The Happiest Man on Earth*, last season so you know you must see his new play. **Kevin Kling**, a world-renowned storyteller and actor seen on PBS and heard on NPR, creates a storytelling-theater hybrid that is entertaining, funny, and moving.

Their plays honor the many stories of our world. You'll hear about queer stuntmen in Hollywood striving for love and safety; an Asian American in a rural landscape searching for connection; and an artist joyously celebrating his perspective of the world through his differences. These stories explore questions of religious freedoms and how we care for our wellness and the wellness of those we love.

Buy your tickets, tell your friends, and introduce new guests to the Festival. Plan your visit and share the experience that only CATF can offer you – a fully produced repertory of all world premieres, engaging conversation with familiar and new faces, and direct access to the artists making the work.

If you are wondering what to do in these changing and uncertain times, experience the arts and come to the theater – join in community and listen to the contemporary voices of our time. CATF invites you to **five plays in repertory**, fine dining, beautiful scenery, and the gathering of like-minded theater lovers who believe stories – live on-stage – are worth the journey. Come and feel the power of new plays.

We excitedly introduce Season 2025.

See you this summer!

Peggy McKowen
Artistic Director

**The Contemporary
American Theater
Festival creates
new plays and art
that make our
culture, home,
and world better.**

Read the joint statement from
CATF, Long Wharf Theatre,
New York Theatre Workshop,
Portland Center Stage, and
The Public Theater.



CATF chooses to lead this effort with love and care for artists, audiences, and advocates. We choose to uplift our values of creating fearless art, telling diverse stories, serving our communities, and welcoming an inclusive family to our new play experience.

CATF chooses one path – to live our values and achieve our dreams – knowing that actions and words matter.

We recognize these choices impact the funding sources available to CATF.

WE CHOOSE to continue – we choose to make art in the face of censorship and oppression – to exercise our constitutional right to free speech and expression for all.

**We invite you to choose
this path with us.**



WORDS MATTER

Diverse Stories // Community // Inclusion // Love
FEARLESS STORIES MATTER



HAPPY FALL

A QUEER STUNT SPECTACULAR

BY LISA SANAYE DRING
WITH ROGUE ARTISTS ENSEMBLE

A WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
ROGUE ARTISTS ENSEMBLE AND THE LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER

SPONSORED BY MINA GOODRICH & LAWRENCE DEAN,
HANK WILLARD & JEFFREY GREER, AND ALAN B. GIBSON

A THRILLING AND COMEDIC ADVENTURE

Two queer Hollywood stuntmen navigate the dangers of exposing their love. Based on true life events and told through live stunts, video, puppetry, and cinematic illusions, this story is a fun, raucous tribute to the resiliency of the LGBTQIA+ community. Illuminating issues of identity in the film industry, this play highlights the importance – and danger – of being true to one's self.

“Others don't fall like Felix. Almost nobody does, in fact. So flat on your face. So intense. It's a little like love.

LISA SANAYE DRING is a writer and director from Hilo, Hawaii and Reno, Nevada. Her play *SUMO* was produced by La Jolla Playhouse and Ma-Yi Theater Company in 2023 and The Public with Ma-Yi in 2025. She was the 2024 Tow Foundation Writer-in-Residence with Ma-Yi. Her play *Kairos* is receiving a Rolling World Premiere with NNPN. Lisa has won an Edgerton Award, Broadway World Award, and PLAY LA Stage Raw/Humanitas Prize. They've been a finalist for the Relentless Award, O'Neill Playwrights' Conference (2x), Seven Devils Playwrights Conference, and a 2x finalist (one honorable mention) for the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. Fellowships include MacDowell, Blue Mountain Center, and Yaddo. They received an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Interactive Programming for co-writing and co-directing a project with Matt Hill.

MAGDALENE

BY MARK ST. GERMAIN



A WORLD PREMIERE

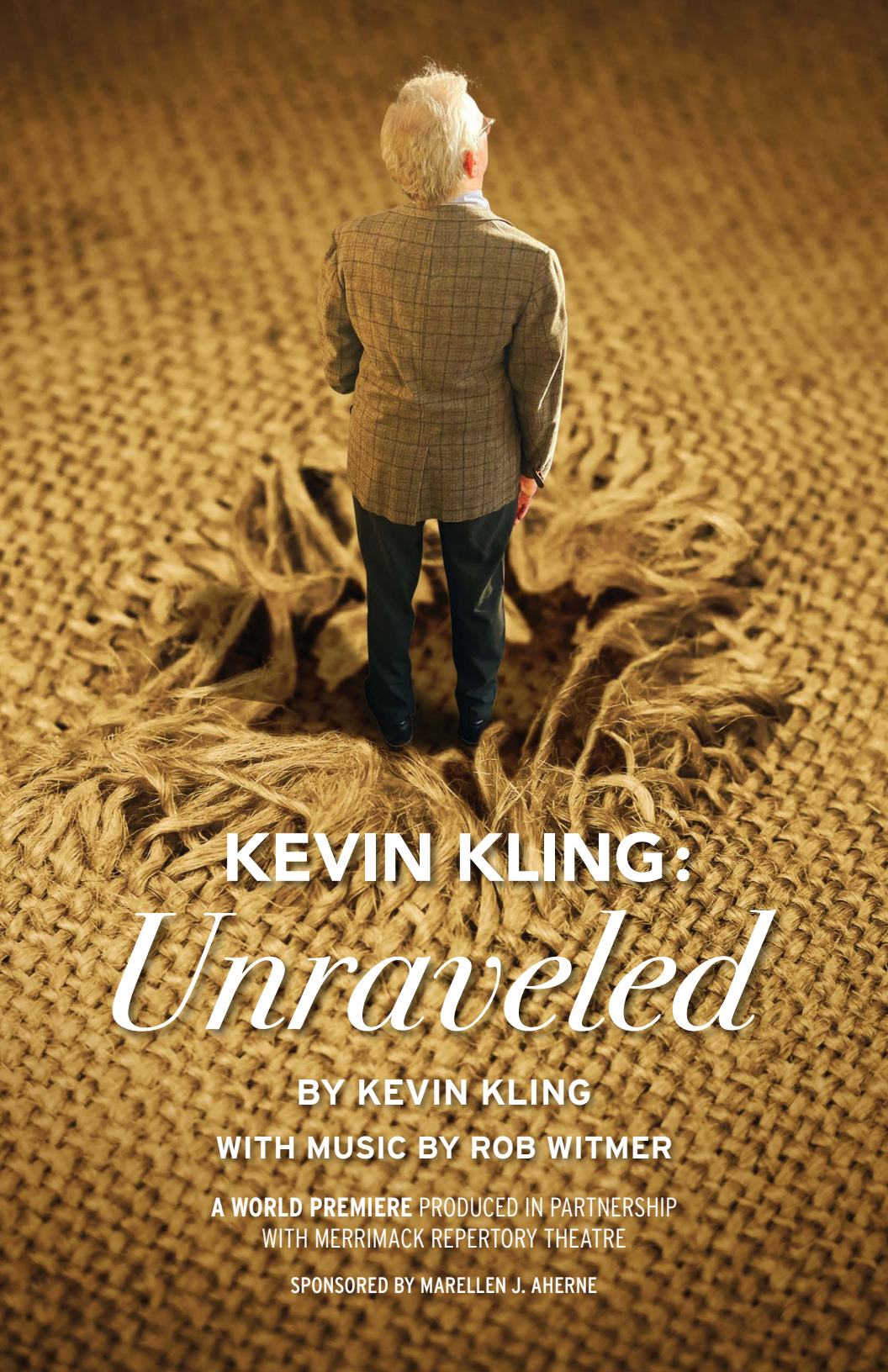
SPONSORED BY BETH K. BATDORF & JOHN S. BRESLAND
IN MEMORY OF PETE HOFFMAN

A HUMOROUS AND INTELLECTUAL DRAMA

Eighteen years after the crucifixion, Peter reconnects with the banished Mary Magdalene. After casting her out, he now seeks her advice and counsel. Questions erupt as they recall different versions of Jesus, His miracles, and His vision for the faith. Whose memories are closest to the truth? Whose secrets are revealed? Whose stories will stand the test of time?

“People don’t want to think more than they have to, they take their opinions from the most popular ones and follow whoever is leading.

MARK ST. GERMAIN has written the plays *Freud’s Last Session* (Off Broadway Alliance Award), *Forgiving Typhoid Mary* (*Time Magazine’s* “Year’s Ten Best”), *Becoming Dr. Ruth*, and *Scott and Hem in the Garden of Allah*. With Randy Courts, he has written the musicals *The Gifts of the Magi*, *Johnny Pye and the Fool Killer*, and *Jack’s Holiday*. Mark’s musical, *Stand by Your Man*, the Tammy Wynette story, was created for Nashville’s Ryman Theater. His play *The God Committee* has been made into a film with the same name. He directed and produced the documentary “My Dog, An Unconditional Love Story” featuring Richard Gere and Glenn Close, among others. Television credits include *The Cosby Show* and Dick Wolf’s *Crime and Punishment*. His books include the comedic memoir *Walking Evil* and the thriller *The Mirror Man*. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild, the Writers Guild East, and an Associate Artist at Barrington Stage Company. Barrington Stage named their second stage “The St. Germain Stage.”



KEVIN KLING:
Unraveled

BY KEVIN KLING
WITH MUSIC BY ROB WITMER

**A WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE**

SPONSORED BY MARELLEN J. AHERNE

A HEARTWARMING TALE WITH MUSIC

Kevin Kling is a weaver of stories. He is constantly looking for patterns, connections, and unexpected intersections that connect us to one another and to the world. With abundant humor and offbeat insights, with an ode to love and nods to the gods, Kling unravels the threads that have led him to an unexpected destination. There's the trip you plan...and the trip you take. With music by Rob Witmer.

“And I'm thankful I was given the chance to rework my own ending.”

KEVIN KLING is very excited to premiere *Unraveled* at CATF, adding to over 40 years of collaborations with his friend Steven Dietz and, more recently, the brilliant Rob Witmer. In 2023, they premiered *Best Summer Ever* at Merrimack Repertory Theatre. Kevin's plays have been produced by the Guthrie Theatre, Seattle Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Sydney and Perth Arts Festivals, Spoleto USA, Actors Theater of Louisville, the Goodman, Children's Theatre Company, Denver Center Theater Company; Off-Broadway at Westside Arts, Second Stage Theater, and many others. Commissions include the Minnesota Orchestra, Zeitgeist Ensemble, and the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra. Kevin has been awarded an NEA Grant, Whiting Award, McKnight Fellowship, Bush Fellowship, and two Upper Midwest Regional Emmy Awards. As a storyteller, Kevin has toured the US, Europe, Australia, and Thailand. He is a frequent performer at the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, TN. Kevin has written five books, produced seven CD's, and has performed often on PBS and NPR's "All Things Considered." He is the Minneapolis Storyteller Laureate.

Side Effects May Include...

BY LISA LOOMER



A WORLD PREMIERE

SPONSORED BY C.M. & STEPHANIE PARTRIDGE

A FEARLESS AND FUNNY DRAMA

What happens when the trust we place in our medical system actually makes us sicker? After a series of diagnoses, a mother leads us through her son's search for wellness, a Kafkaesque journey through the world of psychiatry. Written with humor and fury, the story explores the side effects of fighting through illness with the ones we love. In these crazy times, it asks us to question: are we medicating life itself?

“But isn't it sometimes normal to suffer?”

LISA LOOMER is happy to be back at CATF after her production of *Accelerando* opened the Festival in 1991. She is the bookwriter of *Real Women Have Curves*, for which she received the 2024 Kleban Prize for most promising musical theatre librettist. The musical opened on Broadway in April 2025. As a playwright, her work has been produced at major theaters across the country and taught in both Women's Studies and Latine Studies classes. Her play *Roe*, about *Roe v. Wade*, debuted at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and went on to such theaters as Arena Stage, the Goodman, and Berkley Rep. Other plays include *The Waiting Room* (Williamstown, Vineyard), *Living Out* (Mark Taper, Second Stage), *Distracted* (Mark Taper, Roundabout), *iBocón!* (Mark Taper Forum), and *Café Vida* (LATC). Ms. Loomer is an alumna of New Dramatists and the recipient of the American Theater Critics Award (twice), PEN Award, Jane Chambers Award (twice), Kennedy Center New Plays Award, Susan Smith Blackburn, and an Imagen Award for positive portrayals of Latine people in all media. Screen credits *Girl, Interrupted* and *Carmen*.

DID MY GRANDFATHER KILL MY GRANDFATHER?

An unlikely Vietman War story

BY CODY LEROY WILSON



A WORLD PREMIERE

SPONSORED BY DAVID & SUZANNE ALEXANDER

A COMPELLING AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Cody tells the unlikely journey of his blended family from Vietnam to Plum Run, West Virginia. In this compelling tale, he examines what it means to be Asian American, to love one family while embracing the unknown, and ultimately to question his own identity. This powerful story proves that who you are is a choice of your own making.

“I still have more questions than answers. But I’ve also learned to reconcile with that fact.”

CODY LEROY WILSON is a Vietnamese actor/playwright from West Virginia with a BFA in Acting from West Virginia University. Cody is honored to have his play *Did My Grandfather Kill My Grandfather?* have its world premiere with CATF; previously the play has been workshopped during Pan Asian Repertory’s NuWorks Festival in 2023 in New York City. He also debuted another one man show, *Halfanese: Two Halves of a Whole Idiot* with Pan Asian during their 2024 NuWorks Festival. Off Broadway credits include: *My Man Kono* (world premiere) with Pan Asian Rep, *Handbagged* at 59E59 Theater during the Brits Off Broadway Festival. NYC credits include: *Prisoners of Quai Dong* with Prism Stage, *Titus Andronicus* and *Midsummer* with NYSX. Regional credits include: *Book of Will*, *Handbagged* (US premiere), and *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* with Roundhouse Theater; *As You Like It* at Folger Library; *Measure for Measure* at Hudson Valley Shakespeare. Film/TV include: *Hello Tomorrow*, *Impractical Jokers*, *Russian Doll*, *11 Blocks to Go*, and “Gravedigger Pilot.” Cody dedicates this show to his family, those he is grateful enough to know and love as well as the family he never met from Vietnam; as a Vietnamese artist it is Cody’s goal to uplift the stories and voices of Asian Americans everywhere.

talktheater

Embrace the festival experience by attending and participating in talktheater events!

Meet artists and other audience members as you explore the many stages of new play development and enrich your knowledge surrounding these new works.



BACKSTAGE TOUR

You know what happens on stage, now go backstage for an exclusive look to see how it all happens.

FREE / RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
FRANK CENTER / 10AM

JULY 17, 24, & 31

BRUNCH & ART

Meet and chat with members of CATF's Acting Company. The actors will share their professional journey and their insights on this year's productions.

\$45 / RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
CCA 1, ROOM G03 / 10AM

JULY 18, 25, & AUG 1

BREAKFAST WITH PEGGY

Get to know CATF's Artistic Director, Peggy McKowen. Peggy shares her extensive experience producing new plays, her rich history with CATF, and her plans for CATF's future.

\$45 / RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
BISTRO 112 / 10AM

JULY 13, 20, 27, & AUG 3

CATF IN CONTEXT

This scholarly approach to the festival takes a deep dive into the worlds of the plays.

FREE / RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
CCA 1, ROOM G03 / 10AM

- JULY 12** Who was Mary Magdalene?
JULY 19 Children of Reunion:
Vietnamese Adoptions and the
Politics of Family Migrations
JULY 26 Women in the Church:
A Panel with Faith Leaders
AUG 2 Psychotropic Medications

CHANGEOVERS

Watch the stage transform right before your eyes. Director of Production Trent Kugler gives you a step-by-step walkthrough of how the sets change from one show to another.

FREE / NO RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
TIMES & LOCATIONS VARY BY DATE

- JULY 13** Magdalene
JULY 16 Grandfather
JULY 20 Kling
JULY 23 Side Effects
JULY 27 Magdalene
JULY 30 Grandfather
AUG 3 Kling

JULY 15 AND 22 TALKTUESDAY EVENTS
PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM
THE WV HUMANITIES COUNCIL.





KNOW BEFORE YOU GO (KBYG)

A live-streamed, interactive Zoom conversation with Artistic Director Peggy McKowen who will give you context to your upcoming performances.

FREE / REGISTRATION REQUIRED
ONLINE (ZOOM) / 10AM

JULY 16, 23, & 30

LECTURES

Hear from experts as they explore the constructs and context of the shows, and meet resident artists as they share their creative process and discuss how they got to where they are.

FREE / RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
SHIPLEY / 4:30PM

- JULY 12** **The Playwrights' Panel**
JULY 19 **Fights, Falls, and Fakery:
Meet the Stunt Directors**
JULY 26 **Is Storytelling Theater?
Is Theater Storytelling?**
AUG 2 **An Openly Gay Stuntman:
Changing Stereotypes
in Hollywood**

QUESTIONS?

Email us at: Call us at:
boxoffice@catf.org **681-240-2283**

POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS

Add another layer to your new play experience and join other passionate theatergoers and CATF creatives to respond to, discuss, and unpack the plays.

FREE / NO RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
TIMES AND LOCATIONS VARY BY DATE

- JULY 16** **Magdalene**
JULY 17 **Side Effects & Kling**
JULY 18 **Happy Fall**
JULY 20 **Grandfather**
JULY 23 **Kling**
JULY 24 **Grandfather & Magdalene**
JULY 25 **Happy Fall**
JULY 27 **Side Effects**
JULY 30 **Magdalene**
JULY 31 **Side Effects & Kling**
AUG 1 **Happy Fall**

TALKTUESDAY

On Tuesdays in July, CATF collaborates with musicians, artists, and storytellers. Each event is followed by a post-show conversation.

\$20 / RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
LOCATIONS VARY BY DATE / 5PM

- JULY 15** **Film Screening**
JULY 22 **Staged Reading**
JULY 29 **Speak Story Series
Featuring Adam Booth**

talktuesday

Don't miss out on talkTuesdays at the Festival! Kick your week off with various art forms that speak to contemporary American theater and the themes explored in the plays.

SPECIAL PARTNERSHIP:

SPEAK STORY SERIES

**\$20 / TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR
JULY 8 / 7:30PM**

Join our friends at Speak to screen the documentary "Belonging in the USA: The Story of Michael D. McCarty," followed by a storytelling talkback session with Michael.

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church
100 W. Washington Street

TORNADO TASTES LIKE ALUMINUM STING DOCUMENTARY VIEWING

**\$20 / RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
JULY 15 / 5PM**

Last year, filmmaker James Futenbeck visited CATF to continue his documentary on playwright Harmon dot aut. Watch the film to learn more about *Tornado Tastes Like Aluminum Sting*, which premiered at CATF.

Shepherdstown Opera House
131 W. German Street

STAGED READING

**\$20 / RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
JULY 22 / 5PM**

Dive into the new play development process with a staged reading of a new play! Play TBD.

Marinoff Theater, 62 W. Campus Drive

SPEAK STORY SERIES FEATURING ADAM BOOTH

**\$20 / RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
JULY 29 / 7:30PM**

Listen to the 2022 West Virginia Folk Artist of the Year blend traditional mountain folklore, music, and awareness of contemporary Appalachia to create original, forward-thinking story artistry.

Marinoff Theater, 62 W. Campus Drive

HOW TO ORDER

TICKETS

Are you ready to get your tickets for this Summer? Go online to catf.org or call the Box Office at **681-240-2283**.

DISCOUNTS

Do you qualify for a student, senior, military, or West Virginia resident weekday discount? Call the Box Office to order your tickets!

GROUPS

Have a group of ten or more people? Contact the Group Sales Manager at groupsales@catf.org to receive your group discount!

REP PASSES

REP5

\$300
REGULAR

\$290
SENIOR

REP3

\$201
REGULAR

\$174
SENIOR

SINGLE TICKETS

\$70
REGULAR

\$60
SENIOR

\$40
SUNDAY EVENING
(PERFORMANCES AT
OR AFTER 4PM)

EXPERIENCE Shepherdstown

While you're at the Festival, make sure you explore downtown Shepherdstown and enjoy everything that Jefferson County has to offer! Visit the new Shepherdstown Visitors Center to learn about all of the wonderful activities in the area.

Shepherdstown is filled with opportunities, including a variety of restaurants, unique shops, historic sites, vibrant art galleries, and more! Add even more to your Festival experience by exploring the great outdoors and historical sites throughout Jefferson County - Harpers Ferry, Bolivar, Charles Town, and Ranson.

Visit the **PLAN YOUR VISIT** pages at **CATF.ORG** and these local visitor centers for more info:

SHEPHERDSTOWN WELCOME CENTER

100 E. German Street
Shepherdstown, WV
304-876-2786

JEFFERSON COUNTY WELCOME CENTER

37 Washington Court
Harpers Ferry, WV
304-535-2627

CHECK OUT:
WHEREALMOSTHEAVENBEGINS.COM



2025 SCHEDULE

contemporaryamerican theaterfestival

AT SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY

JULY 11 - AUGUST 3

TICKETS: CATF.ORG / 681-240-2283

For more information about previews and the full preview schedule visit catf.org.

Opening performances are highlighted in **red**.

* Followed by Post-Show Discussion

^ Followed by Public Changeover

talktheater events are italicized.

15	TUESDAY	16	WEDNESDAY	17	THURSDAY	18	FRIDAY	19	SATURDAY	20	SUNDAY
5PM	TALKTUESDAY	10AM	KBYG	10AM	BACKSTAGE	10AM	BRUNCH & ART	10AM	CONTEXT	10AM	BREAKFAST
		1PM	GRANDFATHER	12PM	HAPPY FALL	12PM	SIDE EFFECTS	12PM	GRANDFATHER	12PM	SIDE EFFECTS
		3PM	KLING	2:30PM	SIDE EFFECTS*	2:30PM	KLING	12PM	MAGDALENE	12PM	KLING^
		7PM	GRANDFATHER^	2:30PM	MAGDALENE	4PM	GRANDFATHER	2:30PM	HAPPY FALL	2:30PM	HAPPY FALL
		8PM	MAGDALENE*	8PM	SIDE EFFECTS	8PM	HAPPY FALL*	4:30PM	LECTURE	4PM	GRANDFATHER*
				8PM	KLING*	8:30PM	GRANDFATHER	8PM	SIDE EFFECTS	5PM	MAGDALENE
								8PM	KLING		

SIDE EFFECTS MAY INCLUDE...

A World Premiere by Lisa Loomer
RUN TIME 90 minutes
VENUE STUDIO 112

DID MY GRANDFATHER KILL MY GRANDFATHER?

A World Premiere by Cody LeRoy Wilson
RUN TIME 90 minutes
VENUE STUDIO 112

KEVIN KLING: UNRAVELED

A World Premiere by Kevin Kling
In partnership with Merrimack Repertory Theatre
RUN TIME 90 minutes
VENUE MARINOFF

MAGDALENE

A World Premiere by Mark St. Germain
RUN TIME 90 minutes
VENUE MARINOFF

HAPPY FALL: A QUEER STUNT SPECTACULAR

A World Premiere by Lisa Sanaye Dring
with Rogue Artists Ensemble
Produced in partnership with Rogue Artists
Ensemble and the Los Angeles LGBT Center
RUN TIME 105 minutes
VENUE FRANK CENTER

11 FRIDAY

5:30PM **GRANDFATHER**
8PM **HAPPY FALL**

12 SATURDAY

10AM CONTEXT
12PM **GRANDFATHER**
12PM **KLING**
3:30PM **GRANDFATHER**
4:30PM **LECTURE**
8PM **MAGDALENE**
8PM **SIDE EFFECTS**

13 SUNDAY

10AM **BREAKFAST**
12PM **SIDE EFFECTS**
12PM **MAGDALENE^**
2PM **HAPPY FALL**
4PM **SIDE EFFECTS**
5PM **KLING**

2025 SEASON: JULY 11 - AUGUST 3

contemporary**american**
theater**festival**

AT SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY

PO BOX 429 SHEPHERDSTOWN WV 25443

BOX OFFICE: 681-240-2283

CATF.ORG

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"Top new play festival"

—The New York Times

